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Telephone Douglas 62

Editors **GEORGE H. KRESS**
EMMA W. POPE
 Associate Editor for Nevada . . . **HORACE J. BROWN**
 Associate Editor for Utah **J. U. GIESY**

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EDITORIALS

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Twenty-five years ago the California Medical Association, then known as the Medical Society of the State of California, upon the initiative of one of its younger members, the late Philip Mills Jones, established its official publication, the *California State Journal of Medicine*.

In March, 1924, upon the suggestion of its then editor, the late William Everett Musgrave, the name of the official California publication, after it became the accredited representative of the Nevada and Utah State Medical Associations, was changed to CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

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The California Medical Association may well be proud of the vigorous manner in which its journal sprang into existence and for the valiant and efficient way in which it battled for a widespread organization of the medical profession and the elevation of the standards of medical education, licensure and practice.

Its founder, Philip Mills Jones—for if this journal had a founder, he more than any other one man was its sponsor—was no mollicoddle type of man. He was a clear thinker, a clever editor, a fighter. He was human, very human, both in his weaknesses and in his strength. He made enemies, but he likewise had strong and devoted friends. He was proud of the profession of medicine; loyal to its principles and to its members, and his beliefs, as printed in the columns of this publica-

tion, played a very considerable part in the up-building of our State Medical Society at a crucial time in its existence.

He is no longer with us, for with a host of other colleagues who were once part of us in the brunt of the fray, both in civil practice and in medical society organization work, he has gone on into the Great World Beyond. We are grateful that these men lived and played their parts so well, and that it was our good fortune to know them and to profit through association with them. May their souls rest in peace.

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Just as they came and went, so in good time each of the rest of us who have come, in equal measure, will go. And in the rush of daily work and responsibilities only a few will pause, to linger and consider, in contemplation of such small deeds of good and of service as it may have been our fortune to have rendered.

Yet in an organization such as ours, where we are all bound together by ideals of service in a profession that labors for the conservation of human health, the prolongation of human life and the alleviation of human suffering and disease, we are through such service brought together in many respects, as are the members of a family who are bound together by blood and the inherited tendencies of their forbears.

A blood family group whose members ignore the traditions of their blood, their forbears and race, rarely amounts to much. Honest, respectful pride of lineage, in order to live up to the best of one's forbears and blood, is desired by all who would make of themselves human units whose existence warrants a reason for being.

So also, in an organization such as this great California Medical Association—one of the large state medical societies of the nation—it may be worth our while to pause a bit from time to time and think for the moment of some of the aims and achievements of those who labored in our organization in the years gone by.

The early history of the medical profession of California is still to be written, and the official journal in which a monthly survey of the work of our society is presented on printed page goes back only a quarter of a century. Not very long, as judged by the history of man, but what wonderful, massive years in the forward movement of scientific medicine!

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In November, 1902, just twenty-five years ago this month, Volume 1, No. 1, of this journal was printed and mailed. The memory of our older members will carry back to that time in recollection of its advent among them. Yet how few, how very few among them have bound volumes thereof. As a matter of fact, Volume 1, No. 1, has even disappeared from the file in our central office, and the editors would be glad to acknowledge the gift from any member who could again

re-establish for the Association the complete sequence of the file of its official publication.

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These remarks suggested themselves as a prelude to the introduction of a new column which is inaugurated in the Miscellany department of this issue, and which will appear under the caption: "Twenty-Five Years Ago."

We commend this column to our members: both old and new. It will harm none of us to know the stand colleagues who are still with us took on this, that and the other subject. And if it remind some of us who had the pleasure and honor of knowing some of the stalwarts who are no longer with us, of what was the attitude of those colleagues, now dead, on the issues of their day, that also will be good and heart satisfying.

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For member colleagues who have not been long in California, and for recent graduates from both in and out our state, the column will be worthy of perusal as showing that twenty-five years ago the California Medical Association was functioning in much the same way as at present, with equally high ideals and record of good work; and that its members of that time, in measure equal to that of today, were performing their duties in civil and hospital practice, painstakingly, alertly, and by the standards and knowledge of their day, quite as scientifically and as efficiently as we do today who still carry on, whether we be members of the this California profession a few or many years.

The Twenty-Five Years Ago Today column will not be an interpretation by the editors, of how we today view what was done then, but will be a matter-of-fact presentation by actual quotation of what our colleagues at that time felt and did. And because of such literal quotation it will be worth just that much more to all those who believe that a knowledge of the past makes for a better present and future.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE—DOES HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

It is just a quarter of a century since America had its first visitation from bubonic plague. The discovery of its presence in San Francisco led to an acrimonious exchange of opinions in which state and city executives took issue with the medical societies and federal public health authorities; the two former contending that the epidemic then prevalent was not, and the two latter insisting that it was, true bubonic plague. By the march of the events which followed, the federal government and the medical societies were sustained.

Today we all know that at that time bubonic plague, that dreaded scourge of the Orient, made its appearance in California; and also that during the same period the modern-day method of attacking the disease at its dangerous source to man—the rat—was worked out.

Reference to the San Francisco outbreak is made in one or two of the paragraphs which are

to be found in the Twenty-Five Years Ago column in the Miscellany department of this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE; and in succeeding issues further excerpts thereon will be printed in that column.

To give in this issue the word-picture of these various comments a more composite setting, and because adequate prevention measures are still being fought for, the Los Angeles outbreak of 1924 is further discussed in this issue. Articles in the Current Comment and Medical History columns of the Miscellany Department of this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will shed some interesting sidelights on what recently took place in Los Angeles, and what transpired in London in the seventeenth century.

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In the intervening twenty-five years which have elapsed since the San Francisco outbreak, the cities of Oakland, California; Galveston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Tampa, Florida, have gone through outbreaks of this much feared disease. Each of those epidemics took its toll of death among human beings, and each of those outbreaks meant not only a heavy expenditure of money in an immediate attempt to overcome the disease, but also a very large indirect loss to the commercial and other material interests of those cities, until other states in the Union and the outside world felt they could again safely carry on business relations with residents of the infected communities.

In every instance the federal authorities through the United States Public Health Service promptly went to the aid of state, county, and city health authorities to get prompt control of the epidemics, so that the other seaports in our own and foreign countries would not place an embargo on the ports of the cities just named.

Each of the above-named cities followed up its sad experience by the enactment of local ordinances designed to prevent a recurrence of such outbreaks.

* * *

Public health authorities in our own and European countries are agreed that, after plague once establishes itself in the rodent family (especially among rats, and in California, squirrels), then in order to keep outbreaks of the disease from occurring among human beings it is necessary to keep the rodent, and especially the rat population, down to a minimum. How is this end to be most efficiently attained?

The highest authorities in the United States Public Health and Federal Biological departments are agreed that rat-trapping and rat-poisoning are only palliative measures; and that rat-proofing requirements for buildings, which prevent rats from gaining access to easy shelter and breeding and food supply places, must form the basis of all logical preventive measures against the bubonic plague.

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Not in any desire to give undue publicity to the bubonic plague outbreak in San Francisco